



# THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

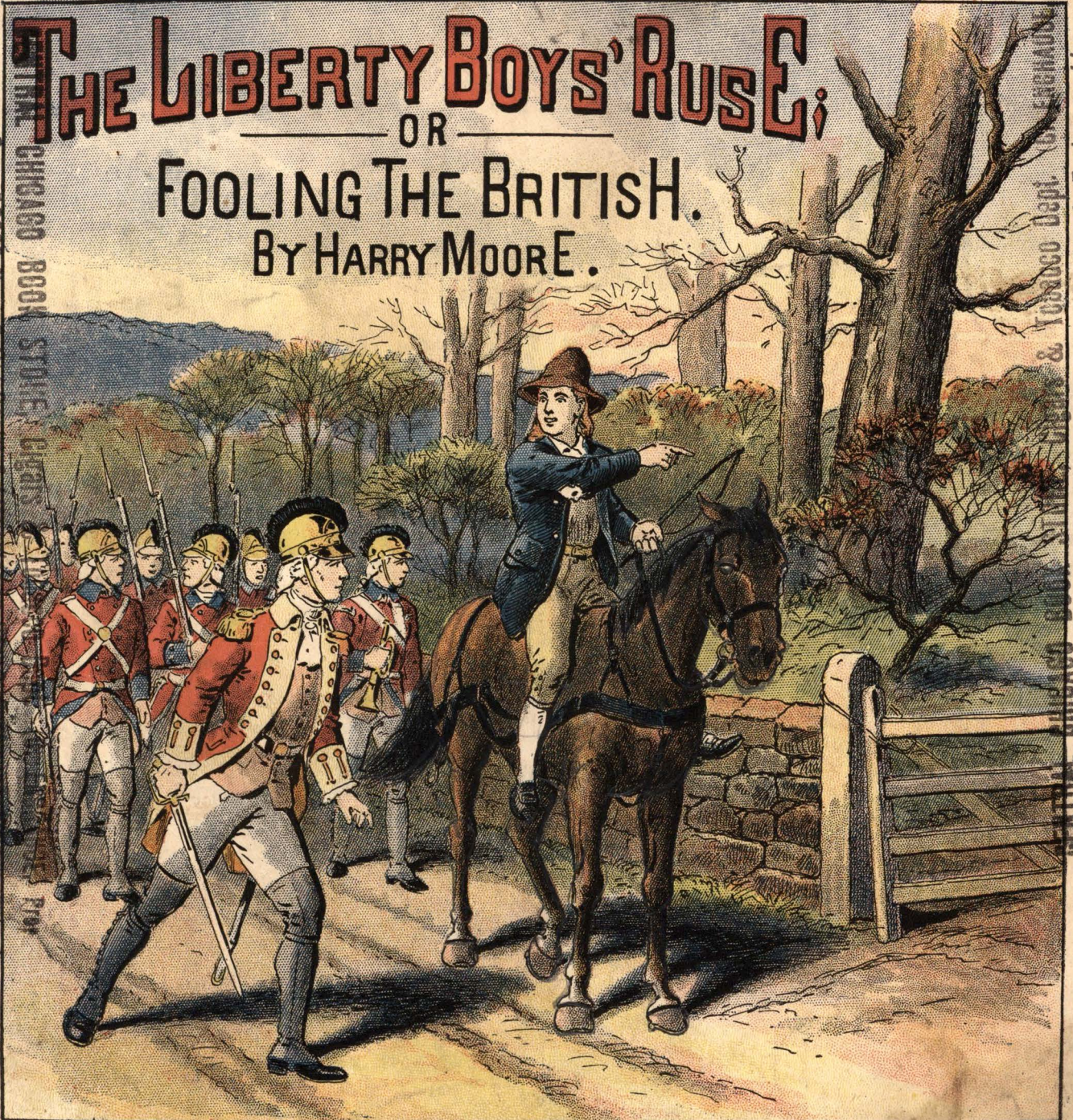
Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, by Frank Tousey.

No. 14.

NEW YORK, APRIL 5, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS' RUSE; OR FOOLING THE BRITISH. BY HARRY MOORE.



Go through that gate and down the road," said Dick, pointing; "just across the ravine you will find the rebels."

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## THE LIBERTY BOYS' RUSE

OR,

## FOOLING THE BRITISH.

By **HARRY MOORE.**

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE BRITISH GENERALS.

It is the last week of May, 1777.

In a room in the building occupied as temporary headquarters, in the village of New Brunswick, N. J., were the two British generals, Howe and Cornwallis.

Cornwallis sat at his desk, his elbow on the top.

He was cool and calm, but there was a frown upon his face.

Howe was pacing the floor like a caged lion.

He was plainly greatly excited.

"This is a fine state of affairs!" he exclaimed; "when a gang of rebel militia, and boys at that, can come right through the British lines, as it were, and capture twenty thousand pounds in British gold, and the convoy, also! Jove! it is enough to drive one distracted. Cornwallis, that gang of young fellows who call themselves the 'Liberty Boys of '76' have done us more harm than any regiment Washington has—did you know it?"

"Yes, your excellency, I am well aware of that fact!" replied Cornwallis.

"They are brave as lions, daring and always doing something you are not looking for."

"So they are. That captain of theirs, Dick Slater, is a host within himself."

"He is the most slippery fellow I ever heard of!"

"So he is; he has been right within our lines, and indeed

within our very ranks, a number of times, and has always succeeded in making his escape."

"So he has. Cornwallis, I would give five hundred pounds to have that young fellow here a prisoner."

"It would be worth it, your excellency."

Howe was silent for a few moments, but kept walking backward and forward across the floor.

"What puzzles me," he said, presently, "is how it was discovered by the rebels that that gold was to be brought down here?"

"It seems strange they should have found it out," agreed Cornwallis. "I can account for it only in one way."

"And that?"

"There has been a spy in New York, and he learned of it."

"That is it, you may be sure. And you may be as sure that the spy was that youth, Dick Slater, too."

"Quite likely, your excellency."

The gold Generals Howe and Cornwallis had reference to had been sent down from a British vessel in New York harbor.

It was intended to be distributed among the British soldiers at New Brunswick.

It had been brought down to a point near Perth Amboy by boat, and was to have been brought the rest of the way to New Brunswick by wagon, but Dick Slater and his company of "Liberty Boys" had appeared upon the scene, and had captured the gold and its convoy, and taken all to the camp of the patriot army at Middlebrook.

This was on the night before the day on which we in-



introduce the British generals to the attention of the reader.

It may be easily understood that the two men were feeling very much out of sorts.

The loss of the gold was considerable.

It had just been brought over from England on the ship.

Of course, there was more on the ship, but twenty thousand pounds was a good deal of money to lose.

And worst of all, from the British standpoint, the gold had gone to aid the patriots.

They would be able to pay their soldiers, buy ammunition, provisions, clothing, etc.

It was small wonder that Generals Howe and Cornwallis were worried and disgusted.

"Well, it can't be helped now," said Howe, finally; "the gold is gone; we will never see it again and we shall have to go ahead with our campaign."

"It will be necessary to have another lot of gold brought down, your excellency," said Cornwallis; "the men are even now on the point of breaking out in open revolt. They will not do a thing unless they receive some money."

"This is a pretty state of affairs!" fumed General Howe.

"They can't well be blamed," said Cornwallis; "they need a little spending money."

"I don't see for what purpose," growled Howe.

"Oh, to purchase little luxuries with. They must have some tobacco, and a little liquor occasionally, and then they have to have some amusement, and they gamble a good bit, you know—and they can't gamble without some money."

"Well, we will have to send for another consignment of gold, I suppose."

"Yes, it is absolutely necessary."

"So be it, then. I will send a messenger at once."

"Do so, your excellency, and I will inform the men of the fact, and it will keep them in good humor until the gold arrives."

"Very well, Cornwallis—and, say; tell them that I will divide five hundred pounds among the men who will capture that young rebel, Dick Slater, and deliver him into my hands!"

"Very well; I will inform the men of your offer."

"Good! and I hope some of them will win the five hundred pounds. The slippery young rebel has caused me more trouble than an entire regiment!"

"Oh, some of them will make an attempt to earn the money, you may be sure of that, your excellency."

The two left the room at the same time and walked to the front door, still talking.

The orderly opened the door, and they stepped out on the stoop.

"You inform the men of what I have just told you, General Cornwallis," said Howe, as the other started to go down the steps.

"I will do so, your excellency; I will tell them of your offer of five hundred pounds to the men who will capture Dick Slater; and will inform them of the fact that you are sending a messenger to-day to New York, ordering that another consignment of gold be sent at once."

"Good! I must send an orderly out for some quills before writing the order for the gold; my quills are all bad and will not let down the ink."

Neither of the generals took notice of a dirty-faced, ragged farmer's boy, with rough shoes on his feet and an old slouch hat on his head standing near by, with hands in pocket and a vacant expression on his face.

It would have been well for them had they done so.

For the dirty-faced farmer's boy was Dick Slater, captain of the company of "Liberty Boys of '76," and the champion patriot spy of the Revolution.

## CHAPTER II.

### DICK IN DISGUISE.

The boy was indeed Dick Slater, the patriot boy spy.

Only the night before, he, with his company of "Liberty Boys" had captured the twenty thousand pounds of gold, and had also captured a British officer and several common soldiers.

He felt a desire to see how the British would take this blow which had been dealt them so unexpectedly.

So he had asked permission from General Washington to go into the British stronghold in disguise, to spy on them, and see how they took the matter in question.

He had fixed himself up as a farmer's boy.

Having streaked his face with dirt and pulled his hair down over his eyes, he then donned a ragged suit of clothes such as the farmer boys of New Jersey wore in those days, together with rough shoes and an old slouch hat, and had ridden to within two miles of the British encampment at New Brunswick.

Then, having concealed his horse in a thicket, he had walked the rest of the way into the village.

He had reached there at about ten o'clock in the morning.

He had strolled about the streets, with hands in pockets and a vacant look on his dirt-streaked face.



No one had paid much attention to him.

One or two would-be witty soldiers had joked him a bit.

Dick had replied in a comical drawl, and his replies, while seemingly innocent, were as good as had been sent.

He had taken up his position in front of the building in question, and had been standing there for nearly half an hour, when the generals came out upon the stoop.

Dick heard every word that passed between Howe and Cornwallis.

He understood it all, too.

He realized the fact that a price of five hundred pounds had been placed on his head by Howe.

And here he was within arm's length of the man who was offering the reward for his capture!

The danger Dick was in did not frighten him in the least.

No feeling of fear for himself took possession of him.

Indeed, it was quite the reverse.

Dick could hardly keep from laughing aloud.

It seemed to him as rather a comical situation.

He wondered what General Howe would say and do; wondered how he would look if he were to suddenly find out that the youth whom he was so desirous of capturing stood within ten feet of him.

"He would be surprised, I judge!" the youth thought.

And in this he was no doubt correct.

As Cornwallis came down the steps and passed Dick, he glanced into the youth's face.

He did not recognize in the dirty face of the supposed farmer's boy, the dreaded young patriot spy, however.

Had he done so, it is easy to imagine what a hue and cry would have ensued.

Dick would certainly have had a hard time making his escape.

Within a circuit of less than one mile were eighteen thousand British soldiers.

What chance would one person have had of escaping?

Dick, however, did not seem to think of this at all.

He did not flinch as Cornwallis looked in his face.

One thing, he knew the officer did not have a very good knowledge of his face.

Cornwallis had seen him only once that he knew of, and then only for an instant as it were, and Dick was disguised as a woman then.

So he of course did not suspect that the farmer's boy was the patriot spy.

Cornwallis passed on down the street, and Howe re-entered the house.

"Well, well! here is some information of interest and

value!" thought Dick. "I am very glad indeed that I came here this morning!"

Fearing that he might attract attention if he remained too long in front of the headquarters of the British general, he walked slowly away.

He went down the street, not far behind Cornwallis.

The officer stopped occasionally and said something to an officer, and occasionally to a private soldier.

Dick walked a little faster and drew up close to the great British officer.

He was near enough to hear what he said when next he spoke to a man.

"Marshall," Cornwallis said, "tell the men under you that General Howe is to send for another consignment of gold to-day, by special messenger."

The man saluted and said:

"Very well, your excellency, they will be pleased to hear it."

"I do not doubt it, Marshall. That was a bad piece of business, letting the rebels get that gold away from us!"

"So it was, your excellency. Well, I hope they won't get this second consignment!"

"I guess there is no danger of that!" said Cornwallis, with a smile. "They will no doubt be satisfied with what they have already secured and will not risk trying to play the same trick again."

"I judge not, your excellency."

"We'll see about that!" thought Dick; "I think the 'Liberty Boys' will have something to say about that!"

Dick fell back, now.

He was afraid some one might notice him and suspect that he was dogging the footsteps of the British general.

He had learned all he cared to know.

"General Howe is going to send a messenger to New York to-day," he thought, "with instructions to send another consignment of gold at once; so the gold will in all probability be sent to-night. Likely it will be sent by boat to the old house as the other consignment was, and hauled from there to here in a wagon."

But Dick could not be sure that this would be the case.

General Howe might decide upon some other plan of procedure.

"I wish I could find out of a certainty how the gold is to be brought," thought Dick.

Then he was struck by an idea.

"The very thing!" he exclaimed to himself. "I think it will succeed admirably!"

Dick started to walk away, with the intention of leaving the village, but at this instant he was seized by half a dozen redcoats and carried, struggling, into a house near by.



## CHAPTER III.

## DICK AND THE REDCOATS.

Dick was taken entirely by surprise.

He had been busy with his thoughts, and had not been taking notice of his surroundings.

The half-dozen redcoats had approached, and, seeing the supposed farmer's boy, they had made up their minds to have some fun with him.

They had been drinking, and were feeling somewhat hilarious.

Of course, being taken by surprise, Dick could offer no effectual resistance.

Six to one was too great odds.

So he had been borne into the house, which proved to be a building occupied by soldiers.

Dick was taken into a large room, which was doubtless used as a dining room, as there were several long tables in the room.

These tables the redcoats shoved over to the sides out of the way.

Then they released Dick, leaving him standing in the centre of the room.

The youth was as yet in doubt regarding the men who had captured him.

Did they know he was not what he pretended to be?

Dick asked himself this question, and as he looked around at the faces of the redcoats, he decided that they had no suspicion that he was other than what he looked to be.

"I think they have brought me in here simply for the purpose of having some fun at my expense," thought Dick, after having taken the swift look at their faces.

"They have been drinking," he thought; "and they have made up their minds to have some sport with me. Well, that will be all right, providing they do not discover who I am, and also providing they do not delay me too long. I don't wish to be detained here a very great length of time."

Dick glanced toward the doors and saw that some of the redcoats were standing in front of each of the doors.

"Oh, there's no use of looking in the direction of the door!" laughed one; "you can't get out! Parker, you will please proceed with the trial."

"Very well," replied a not bad-looking young man of perhaps twenty-five years; "I will question the prisoner."

Then he advanced and faced Dick.

"Prisoner at the bar," he said with mock solemnity,

"you are accused of the heinous crime of being a country lout! Guilty or not guilty?"

Crack!

Dick's fist shot out.

It took the astonished redcoat fairly between the eyes, and down he went with a crash that shook the house.

"I don't 'low nobuddy ter call me er country lout, by gum!" said Dick, in a loud, nasal voice.

The redcoats were for the moment paralyzed with amazement.

They had brought Dick in there to have fun with him.

They had started in to have fun, with the result that one of their number lay flat on his back on the floor, blinking up at the ceiling, and doubtless witnessing the most brilliant meteoric display that had ever fallen to his lot.

Not a word was said by the fallen man's comrades, until after he had recovered his wits and scrambled to his feet.

They seemed to wish to leave it to him to do the talking.

Dick supposed the redcoat would be wildly angry and would want to kill him.

What was his surprise to find that he was entirely mistaken in his judgment of the man.

The soldier rubbed his forehead where Dick's blow had taken effect.

Then he grimaced slightly and remarked:

"The prisoner pleads not guilty to the charge and proves it to the entire satisfaction of the attorney for the prosecution! Said attorney therefore renders verdict in favor of defendant, and if any of the rest of you fellows wish to take the matter up, I will say that I cheerfully resign in your favor!"

"What's the matter with you, Parker?" cried one of the redcoats, "go in and knock the head off the young lout! You are not going to let him hit you a clip like that and get off scott free, are you?"

"I am, most high and mighty comrade! One lick like that is enough for me! I would prefer to dally with the hindlegs of the gay and festive mule, rather than take chances on getting another like that. If you care to, you can try your hand with the young man."

"That's just what I'll do, by Jove! We brought the young lout in here to have fun with, and we're going to have it, you may be sure, and——"

"Ye jes' come out here in the middle uv the room an' call me er lout, ye red-coated, ugly-faced baboon!" cried Dick, keeping up the part of a country youth to perfection; "I'll make ye wush't ye hed be'n more civil, I will, b'gosh!"

Parker clapped his hands.

"Bravo!" he cried; "how do you like that, Sharker? He puts it right straight at you, eh?"



"I'll break your neck, you insolent young scoundrel!" howled the man called Sharker. "I'll teach you to call me a baboon!"

With these words the redcoat rushed toward Dick with all the ferocity of a tiger.

He was in a terrible rage.

It was evident that he would hurt the boy badly, if he could.

And the majority of those present thought that he would be able to do so.

They did not know, nor did Sharker, that he was attacking a youth who was a phenomenon in an athletic way, as well as one who was stronger than the ordinary run of men.

They were soon to find it out, however.

As Sharker advanced, and when he had got within reaching distance, he began striking out at Dick with rapidity and force.

He was going to knock the country boy senseless as quickly as possible.

And he seemed to think it was possible to do it quickly.

But here he made a mistake.

Dick was not the youth to stand still and allow himself to be hit.

He leaped backward, dodged, ducked, evaded the blows of the enraged redcoat, seemingly with scarcely any effort at all, and he parried some of the blows with an ease that was surprising.

It was certainly surprising to the spectators.

Sharker was, as they well knew, the acknowledged "best man" in their regiment, and they had expected to see him knock the boy senseless without any trouble at all.

His failure to do so surprised them.

But they were destined to be even more surprised.

Dick did not intend to content himself with simply avoiding the blows of the other fellow.

He did not believe in those one-sided affairs.

He waited simply till the redcoat should exhaust himself to such an extent that he would be forced to pause, and then Dick took his turn.

He sailed into Sharker at a great rate.

He rained the blows upon the fellow with even greater rapidity than Sharker had shown in striking at him.

And the majority of Dick's blows found a landing place on the face or body of the redcoat.

Dick could hit very hard, if he chose.

He put force into some of his blows, now; others he made light.

The light blows were in the redcoat's face and were calculated to dazzle and confuse him.

The heavy ones were in the chest and stomach and were calculated to make the recipient feel sick.

Dick delivered fifteen or twenty blows in rapid succession, and then, putting his strength in one terrible blow, he knocked the redcoat down with a thump that shook the floor.

The spectators drew a long breath in unison.

It was one great combined sigh from the crowd.

They were amazed.

More, they were almost paralyzed.

They had never before witnessed such a display.

That Sharker should be knocked down dazed, almost senseless, by this seeming country boy, was almost beyond belief.

But they had seen it with their own eyes.

They could not doubt it.

The evidence was before them.

And now their amazement turned to anger.

It was too much, they thought, for one of their number to be treated in such fashion by a country youth.

They decided to have revenge.

"Let's give the country gawk a lesson!" cried one, who was evidently a crony of Sharker's, and he in company with several of the redcoats rushed forward to attack the youth.

As they did so, Dick saw something which he had not expected to see.

The fellow who had been called Parker, and whom he had knocked down first, stood near the door leading to the outer air.

As the redcoats rushed toward Dick, this man opened the door and gave Dick a signal.

It said as plainly as words: "Run for it, my boy!"

Dick mentally thanked this friendly-disposed fellow, but he waited until he had had a chance to knock three or four of the redcoats down, before taking advantage of the opportunity to make his escape.

Then he dodged two or three who were making strenuous efforts to knock him down and ran out of the room and into the street.

Cries of anger and surprise escaped the redcoats, and they darted after Dick, but they could not catch him.

They were not fleet enough of foot.

Dick darted down a side street.

There were soldiers to be seen in almost every direction, and one or two yelled at Dick, but he paid no attention to them.

To one redcoat who got directly in the path he called out:

"Going for a doctor! Don't delay me!"



The man hastily got out of the youth's way, and Dick raced onward.

"That was a good thought," said Dick to himself. "I'll try it again if any one tries to stop me."

He did not have to run far, however.

The redcoats who had started to chase him gave it up very quickly, and, noting this, Dick slowed down to a walk.

This would not attract so much attention.

"I wonder how much time I've lost?" the youth asked himself. "I hope I haven't lost enough so that I will be unable to make a circuit and get to some place on the road to New York, where it will be possible for me to capture the messenger General Howe is sending to New York. I want to get hold of that message so that I will know in what manner the gold is to be sent to New Brunswick. I must get hold of it!"

Dick was soon out of the village.

He had resumed his countrified air while in the village and where he would be seen, but as soon as he was away from the British encampment he quit acting and hastened forward at as rapid a pace as he could go.

Half an hour later he was at the thicket where he had secreted his horse.

The animal was still there, and the youth mounted and rode away.

"Now, if I can get ahead of that messenger, I shall be all right," Dick murmured.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DICK MAKES A CAPTURE.

Dick urged his horse forward at a gallop.

He was afraid the messenger might have got started while he was in the house with the redcoats.

The youth was in deadly earnest.

He was determined that he would make a prisoner of the messenger, find out in what manner the gold was to be sent, and then take the message and deliver it.

This, of course, would be dangerous.

But Dick never allowed possible danger to himself to deter him.

Besides, he felt that he would be more than a match for the one man, and as for the danger in going to New York with the message in the real messenger's place, he had done as dangerous things before.

Dick made quite a circuit.

It was twenty miles or more from New Brunswick to New York, and this would give him plenty of opportunity to get around and ahead of the messenger.

Dick knew the road to New York.

There was only one main road.

And the messenger would undoubtedly take the main road.

Dick knew of a place that would answer his purpose admirably.

It was in the heart of a deep forest.

A little stream crossed the road, and leading down to the stream the road went through a deep cut.

Just before reaching the stream the bluff at the left-hand side disappeared altogether, the trees coming right up to the road.

This would furnish a splendid hiding-place.

So Dick rode hard in order to reach this point ahead of the messenger.

He finally reached it.

"Well, here I am!" he murmured with a breath of relief. "I only hope he hasn't beaten me and gotten past!"

Dick dismounted.

He led his horse twenty yards into the timber and tied him to a tree.

Then he came back to the road, and going down to the little stream, examined the damp earth at the side.

"There has been no horse across here in the past hour," he murmured; "and if he had reached here it could not have been longer than half an hour ago, I am sure."

Events proved that Dick was right.

He had been in his position by the roadside, just within the edge of the timber perhaps half an hour when he heard the sound of the hoofbeats of a horse.

"He's coming!" the youth murmured.

Then he drew a pistol and held it in his right hand.

Dick had taken up his position behind a large tree.

He peered cautiously around it.

It was the messenger, sure enough!

At least so Dick judged.

There was but one horseman, and he was a redcoat.

So undoubtedly he was the messenger.

Dick was sure of it, anyway.

He got ready to do his work.

The youth knew that by surprising the fellow he could avoid the necessity of shooting him.

This, of course, Dick wished to accomplish.

He did not believe in shedding human blood needlessly.

Enough blood was being spilled every day without this.



Dick would much rather take a prisoner than make a corpse.

The horse of the redcoat was now coming at a walk.

The descent through the cut was tolerable steep, and it was advisable to go slow.

The redcoat was whistling a lively air as he came along.

He seemed not to suspect danger to himself.

It was not to be supposed that there would be enemies near.

The country between New Brunswick and New York was supposed to be under the control of the British.

They had forces at Perth Amboy and Paulus Hook, and it was not to be supposed that any patriot soldiers would venture in here in broad daylight.

But the redcoat who was approaching was to learn that there was at least one "rebel" who was not afraid to venture in.

Dick waited until the horse was almost even with him, and then he leaped out and seizing the horse's bit, presented the pistol at the amazed and almost paralyzed horseman, and demanded his immediate and unconditional surrender.

"Attempt to draw a weapon and you are a dead man!" said Dick, sternly.

The redcoat looked into the frowning muzzle of the pistol, then into the grim, threatening eyes of the youth, and decided that discretion was the better part of valor.

"I surrender!" he said, promptly.

"Dismount, then!" ordered Dick.

The redcoat obeyed.

"Place your hands together behind your back!" was Dick's next command.

The redcoat obeyed again.

He realized that he was in the youth's power.

It would do no good to refuse to obey.

Indeed, he felt that it would not be good for him to disobey.

There was something about the youth that impressed the British soldier that he was a person who would do what he said he would.

The deadly ring to the voice had impressed the worthy subject of King George to a pronounced degree.

Dick had prepared himself for the present occasion.

He had procured a piece of strap from the saddle. With this he quickly tied the redcoat's wrists together.

Then he led the fellow into the timber a short distance and tied him to a tree with the hitching-strap from his horse's bridle.

Then Dick went back and brought the horse into the timber.

"I don't want to attract the attention of any chance passers-by," he thought. "Such passers-by would no doubt be redcoats."

This, of course, would not be pleasing to Dick—to have redcoats put in an appearance before he got through with his prisoner.

Dick searched the clothes of the messenger.

He soon found the message.

It was addressed to Admiral Howe.

Admiral Howe was, as Dick knew, General Howe's brother.

The admiral had charge of the fleet of warships in New York harbor.

He was commander of the navy, while his brother was commander-in-chief of the land forces.

Dick had never seen the admiral.

He had, in fact, never seen any of the sailors.

So he was confident he would not be recognized should he go aboard Admiral Howe's ship.

"I will be safe in venturing, I am sure," the youth thought; "this is as it should be."

Then he examined the message.

To his surprise he found that it was not sealed.

In his haste General Howe had not sealed it.

Dick opened the message and read it.

A feeling of pleasure took possession of him as he did so.

"The gold is to be taken in exactly the same manner as before," he thought; "good! that simplifies matters, and will make our work all the easier, as we will know exactly how to go to work."

The prisoner glared at Dick as he was reading the message.

"You're getting your neck ready to be stretched!" he growled.

"You think so?" asked Dick with a smile.

"I know so."

"You mean that you just think you know."

"You are thinking of trying to capture that gold, aren't you?"

Dick smiled.

"Well, yes, I will admit as much," he said, pleasantly; "it will do no harm to admit it to you, as you will do nothing to in any way interfere with the accomplishing of my plans."

"Don't be too sure of it," the redcoat growled.

"I try never to be too sure of anything."

"You had better not try to secure that gold!"



"Why not?"

"Because it will be guarded by a regiment."

"Oh, it will?"

"Yes."

Dick smiled.

"It doesn't say anything about a regiment in this message," he said; "it says simply that an escort of half a dozen be sent under charge of an officer."

"I know, but I heard General Howe tell one of our captains to have a regiment ready to go to the point where the gold is to be brought ashore, so as to make sure that the rebels won't come in and capture the gold as they did the other time."

The fellow told this quite glibly, but Dick was confident he was lying.

"I'll risk a regiment being there," he said, quietly.

"You don't believe me?"

"I didn't say so."

"But you insinuated it."

"Well, then, to tell the plain truth, I don't believe you!"

A glum look appeared on the redcoat's face.

"All right!" he said; "so much the worse for you!"

"As I just remarked, I'll risk that."

"The redcoat saw he could not frighten Dick, and desisted from the attempt.

He looked at Dick searchingly.

"Who are you, anyway," he asked.

"It doesn't matter," replied Dick.

"No, but I have a curiosity to know."

"Oh, I have no particular objection to telling you."

"Do so, then."

"My name is Slater—Dick Slater."

The redcoat gave a start and uttered an exclamation.

"Are you the fellow who has made such a reputation as Captain of the 'Liberty Boys' and as a spy?" he asked.

"I don't know as to that. I only know that I am Dick Slater, and that I am the captain of the company of patriot soldiers known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76.' "

The redcoat stared at Dick, but said no more.

Doubtless he realized, now, the uselessness of trying to frighten the youth.

Dick now began to strip the redcoat of his outer clothing.

The fellow protested.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"I am going to see how I would look dressed up in a nice British uniform!" smiled Dick.

The redcoat stared at Dick in speechless amazement and consternation for a few moments, and then he found his voice.

He seemed to suddenly grasp the meaning of Dick's actions.

"You won't dare!" he gasped.

"Dare what?" asked Dick.

"You won't dare go on in my place and deliver that message!"

"Why not?" smilingly.

"Why not?"

"Yes."

"Why, for the reason that you will be taking your life in your hands, if you do it."

"Well, that will be no new experience."

Dick spoke coolly and calmly.

His tone was so matter-of-fact that the redcoat could not but realize that the youth spoke the truth.

There was no braggadocio about it.

It was a simple statement of fact.

The look which the redcoat now bent on Dick was one of admiration, almost awe.

"You are a brave and daring youth, Dick Slater!"

Dick made a gesture.

"It is nothing," he said; "there are hundreds, even thousands who would do the same thing."

While talking Dick had not been idle.

When he had removed the outer clothing of the redcoat he removed his own outer clothing.

Then he donned the soldier's uniform.

It fitted him first rate.

"We are luckily about the same size and build," he said.

Then he placed his own discarded suit on the prisoner.

"There; now, I will go on about my business," said Dick; "but first I must place you in some safe place, where I will be able to find you when I return."

He left the spot and was gone perhaps ten minutes.

Then he returned, and, untying the redcoat from the tree, led him away through the timber.

"I have found a nice place, down here a ways," he said.

"I think you will be safe there for the time you will have to remain there."

He led the way to a little hollow, and selecting a place where a log lay against a tree, he seated the prisoner upon the log and bound him to the tree.

"You will be more comfortable sitting than standing," said Dick.

Then he stuffed the fellow's own handkerchief in his mouth and bound another over the mouth to keep the first one in.

"That is to keep you from yelling and disturbing the neighbors," said Dick.



Then he took his departure, but returned in a few minutes, leading his own horse.

He tied the horse to a tree.

Then he took his departure.

A few minutes later, mounted on the redcoat's horse and with the message in his pocket, Dick rode up the road in the direction of New York.

## CHAPTER V.

### A BOLD SCHEME.

Dick was bound on a dangerous errand.

He was well aware of this fact.

But he did not falter.

He had been within the British lines on many occasions and had escaped.

He felt that he would be able to do so now.

There were chances in his favor, this time, that had not been in his favor on former occasions.

He was going among members of the ships' companies, and none of those men, he was sure, had ever seen him.

They might, for all he knew, never even have heard of him.

Dick urged the horse forward at a gallop.

"I will have to hurry," he thought; "I must deliver this message and then get back to Middlebrook in time to get my company of 'Liberty Boys' and get to the old house near Perth Amboy, by the time the box gets there with the gold."

Dick was eager to make this capture of the second lot of gold.

The first lot, which had been captured the night before, consisted of twenty thousand pounds of English gold and notes, and the second installment would probably be fully as much.

The money would be of great benefit to the patriots.

They had been needing money, and badly, for some time.

Dick had washed his face in the little stream before leaving the place where he had captured the redcoat, and now he looked spick and span in his brilliant uniform.

He felt that, unless he unfortunately ran across some one who knew him, he would be able to pass muster as a British soldier without trouble.

Dick rode rapidly.

An hour and a half later he was at Paulus Hook, which was just across the river from the city of New York.

It was what is now Jersey City.

Dick made his way to a place where boats were kept for hire.

He dismounted, tied his horse, and made his way down to the shore.

He accosted the owner of the boats.

"You have boats for hire?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

"What do you charge per hour?"

The man named the price.

"I wish a boat for an hour or so," said Dick.

"All right; here air some good 'uns," the man said.

Dick looked at the boats.

He was a good judge of such things.

He had lived on the banks of the Hudson, practically speaking, all his life.

He knew a good boat when he saw one.

"I'll take this one," he said, indicating his choice.

"All right; I'll bring the oars."

The boatman brought out the oars and placed them in the rowboat.

Dick paid him in advance for the use of the boat for one hour.

"If I keep it longer, I will pay you when I come back," he said.

"All right, sir," the boatman said.

He was so obsequious in his demeanor that Dick sized him up as being a royalist.

The sight of a British uniform seemed to make him very obsequious indeed.

Dick looked down the bay to where the British fleet lay at anchor.

"Can you tell me, sir, which is Admiral Howe's flagship?" asked Dick.

"I can, sir," was the reply; "thet's it, yonder," and he pointed to one of the ships.

"Thank you!" said Dick.

"Yer welcome!"

Dick got into the boat, took the oars and rowed away.

He was an expert at rowing, and made the boat skim along at a lively rate.

"Thet chap is ther best han' with ther oars thet I've seen among ther redcoats yit!" thought the old boatman, as he watched Dick row away from the shore.

Dick headed straight for the ship that had been pointed out as being the flagship of Admiral Howe.

The ship was a mile or a mile and a half away, but the row to it was merely sport for Dick.

He liked rowing.

So he was almost sorry when he reached the ship.



As he drew alongside the ship, he was hailed by a man on deck.

The man was evidently a sentinel.

"Ahoy, the boat!" he challenged.

"Hello!" called back Dick.

Dick had stopped rowing, and the boat now rested quietly beside the great vessel.

"Who are you, and what do you want?"

"I am a messenger from General Howe at New Brunswick," replied Dick, promptly; "I have a message for Admiral Howe. Is this his flagship?"

"Aye, aye!" came the reply. "Wait a moment."

Then the man disappeared from Dick's view.

A number of men in naval uniforms now came to the rail and looked down at Dick with interest.

"Those fellows seem to have an easy time of it," thought Dick; "I think if I was to fight for King George I should prefer to be on board ship."

Soon afterward the man who had challenged Dick reappeared.

"You are to come aboard," he said. "Row around to the stern."

"All right."

Dick rowed around to the stern.

The man lowered a rope ladder.

Dick tied the painter to the ladder.

Then he climbed up the ladder.

A few moments later he was on the deck of the ship.

Dick knew he was taking great risks in boldly coming aboard a British warship in this manner.

But it did not matter.

It was worth while taking risks if by so doing he could be able to aid the Cause of Liberty.

There was no appearance of fear or hesitancy in Dick's bearing, however.

He was calm and confident.

He seemed perfectly cool and unconcerned.

"Come with me," said the man.

He led the way across the deck, Dick following.

They walked into the cabin.

"Wait here," said the man.

Dick sat down on the cushioned seat which ran around the side of the room.

The man passed through a doorway and into another room.

He was gone only a few moments.

Then he returned.

"Come," he said.

Dick rose and followed the man, and they entered the adjoining room.

At a desk at one side of this room sat a portly man.

His round, good-natured-looking face resembled that of General Howe to such an extent that Dick knew instantly that this was Admiral Howe, the general's brother.

The man who had conducted Dick into the room announced: "A messenger from General Howe, your excellency," and saluting, withdrew.

"You bring a message from my brother?" the admiral asked.

"Yes, your excellency," replied Dick.

Then he produced it and handed it to the admiral.

"Be seated," said the admiral, as he took the message.

Dick sat down.

The admiral opened the message.

It did not seem to surprise him that the message was not sealed.

Dick imagined the admiral murmured something about "carelessness" under his breath, but was not sure.

The admiral read the message, and as he did so, his florid face grew redder still.

He grew excited.

His hands shook.

"Why, this is amazing—infamous!" he exclaimed, leaping to his feet and walking backward and forward across the floor.

"The idea of the rebels daring to capture the gold! They are regular dare-devils!"

Dick was amused.

He did not dare show it, however.

He was laughing inwardly, but no trace of mirth was allowed to show on his face.

It would not have been safe.

The admiral was very excited and angry.

He paced backward and forward across the floor, uttering exclamations and anathemas on the "rebels" at a great rate.

Presently he paused, however.

Then he sat down.

He stared at the floor moodily for a few moments.

Then he took up the message from his brother and read it again.

"That was bad—bad!" he murmured. "That gold will do the rebels a great deal of good. Gold is the sinews of war, and I think they were pretty short of the 'sinews.' It will help them immensely."

"You are right, admiral," thought Dick, with a feeling of satisfaction; "and if you will send this second installment of gold, as your brother requests, I think we will be able to capture it, and will thus have some more of the 'sinews' of war to our credit!"



The admiral was silent for a few moments; then he said:

"He wants me to send another lot of gold at once. I wonder if it will be safe to do so? What if the rebels should get wind of the fact that we were sending more gold down there? They might capture it, as they did the first lot."

Dick knew the admiral was really talking to himself, so made no remark.

He was smart enough to not speak until spoken to.

Presently the admiral looked at Dick and said:

"What do you think about it? Do you think there will be danger in sending another installment of gold down to New Brunswick?"

Dick shook his head.

"I don't think so, your excellency," he replied.

"I'll do all I can to encourage him to send the gold!" thought Dick.

"You think it will be safe?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"May there not be danger that the rebels will learn of the fact that gold is to be sent, and try to capture it, as they did the first lot?"

"I don't see how they could possibly learn of it, your excellency. The only chance would be that they might guess it, but I don't think there is any danger of that."

"You think not, eh?"

The admiral looked at Dick keenly.

He seemed struck with the youth's appearance.

He looked at the youth reflectively and asked:

"Have you ever seen the young man named here—let me see, what is the name?" looking at the letter; "ah, Slater, Dick Slater, captain of a company of young men known as 'The Liberty Boys of '76.' Have you ever seen him?"

"Once, your excellency," replied Dick, calmly, and meeting the look of the admiral unflinchingly.

"I've seen him a great deal many more times than just once," thought Dick; "but I didn't tell him a falsehood."

"H'm! What sort of a fellow is he, anyway? He must be a wonder!"

"Oh, he doesn't look as though he would set the world by the ears," replied Dick, his modesty being in evidence; "still, if half of what has been said regarding him is true, he has done a few things for the patriot cause."

"I should say so! This last feat of his of capturing the gold was doing a great deal for the patriot cause!"

Then the admiral looked at Dick keenly.

"You say 'patriot cause,'" he remarked; "why 'patriot' instead of 'rebel'?"

"Oh, I don't know, your excellency," said Dick; "down New Brunswick way, where I have been, every one says

'patriot.' I have just fallen into their way of speaking, I guess."

"Humph!"

The admiral looked down at the floor and seemed to be pondering.

"I wonder if he is suspicious of me?" thought Dick.

The idea gave him some uneasiness.

"Why has he asked me so much regarding Dick Slater?" he asked himself.

Then the thought that what General Howe had written regarding him was sufficient to arouse interest came to Dick, and he felt better.

"I guess he isn't suspicious," he thought.

Dick hoped not.

It would be awkward indeed to be detained on board the ship.

If the admiral became suspicious enough to cause Dick to be detained and would send the gold, Dick would be greatly disappointed, for he had set his heart on capturing that second installment of gold.

But the admiral was not suspicious.

He was simply pondering the subject of sending the gold down to New Brunswick.

He knew it was necessary that the gold should go, as the men wanted some money, but he was afraid the "rebels" might capture it.

"I guess I'll send it and take the chances," he murmured, presently, and then Dick knew what he had been pondering.

At this instant there came the sound of trampling feet on deck, and then in the adjoining room.

Then the door opened, and the man who had conducted Dick into the room appeared.

Behind him came a man dressed in the rough clothing of a farmer, and at a glance Dick recognized him, and his heart went down into his shoes.

The fellow was the messenger whom he had captured, and whom he had left bound hand and foot in the timber and gagged, but little more than two hours ago!

"What means this intrusion?" cried the admiral, angrily.

"I beg your pardon, your excellency," said the escaped prisoner; "but the importance of the matter must be our excuse for intruding. That young scoundrel there is Dick Slater, the rebel spy!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### DICK'S IDENTITY IS DISCOVERED.

Admiral Howe leaped to his feet.

He turned red, then pale.



He glared at Dick with eyes which almost started from their sockets.

"Dick Slater!" he gasped; "impossible!"

Dick was taken wholly by surprise.

He had been expecting nothing like this.

The thought that the redcoat might escape and follow him to New York had not occurred to him.

Yet here the fellow was.

And the chances were that he was in serious trouble.

Dick realized this.

Yet his face gave no sign.

The youth had wonderful control of his expression.

It stood him in good stead many times to preserve a calm and unruffled exterior.

It had diverted suspicion on many occasions.

He thought that even now, desperate as seemed the situation, it might do so.

When the admiral cried, "Impossible!" Dick nodded and said:

"Quite so, your excellency! This man," and Dick pointed at the fellow whom he had left a prisoner in the woods two hours before, and looked him unflinchingly in the eyes, "is either drunk or crazy!"

The fellow gasped.

Dick's coolness and audacity were almost too much for him.

He would not have believed that any one in the situation Dick was in could be so cool and calm.

And Dick's appearance went far to make the admiral think the man was wrong.

No one, the admiral reasoned, could show such coolness and indifference if he were really in the situation which the accuser said.

No, there must be some mistake.

The admiral said so.

"You may think you are right," he said; "but it cannot be that you are. Dick Slater, the rebel spy, would not be such a fool as to venture aboard a British ship and into the presence of the admiral of the fleet in this manner!"

"You don't know Dick Slater, your excellency!" cried the redcoat, finding his voice at last; "he will do or dare anything. He has been within the British lines dozens of times, and right in the presence of Generals Howe and Cornwallis, and has succeeded in securing information and making his escape. He seems to take a delight in seeing how daring he can be. This fellow is Dick Slater, and you will do well to not let him escape you!"

Dick shook his head and looked at the redcoat in a pityingly-patronizing manner.

"Poor fellow!" he said; "too bad! too bad! and a right nice-looking fellow, too!"

And then he looked at the admiral and tapped his forehead significantly.

"You are shrewd, Dick Slater!" cried the redcoat, "and as brave as a lion, but you can't make your plan work! I am not crazy, by any means!"

Then he turned to the admiral and went on:

"I am the man whom your brother, General Howe, started from New Brunswick with the message which this young fellow brought your excellency; but this fellow waylaid me in the woods about halfway between New Brunswick and New York, and, after making a prisoner of me, changed clothing with me, took the message, and leaving me bound and gagged in the timber, he came on here, and I suppose has delivered the message. His scheme, no doubt, was to have you send the gold, and then he was going to hasten back to the patriot army, get his men, and capture this installment of gold! Oh, he is a bold and shrewd one!"

The fellow had talked so fast it was impossible to interrupt him, so Dick made no such attempt, but sat there, with a quiet smile on his face, although he realized that the story would be likely to arouse the suspicion in the mind of the admiral that he perhaps was, after all, Dick Slater, the patriot spy.

Dick shook his head, when the fellow had finished, as much as to say, "Poor fellow, he's crazy!"

But the admiral was becoming somewhat imbued with the belief that there might be something in the fellow's story after all.

He turned and looked at Dick searchingly.

He seemed to be sizing the youth up very carefully.

Dick met his gaze unflinchingly.

Having started upon this course, he would play it through to the extreme finish.

All waited for him to speak.

He was silent for some moments and then he said:

"I am beginning to believe that you are Dick Slater, young man!"

Dick smiled.

"You are mistaken," he said, calmly.

"You think so?"

"I know it, your excellency; this man is crazy!"

"I am not crazy; he is a rebel trickster!" the man cried. The admiral was undoubtedly almost convinced.

He looked at Dick again.

"Ah, how I wish some one who really knows Dick Slater was here!" he exclaimed; "then it would be possible to decide between you!"



At this instant footsteps were heard in the outer room, a moment later a captain in the British army appeared. At sight of him Dick's heart sank.

He knew the newcomer.

The man was Captain Parks, an enemy of his, and one who knew him well by sight.

Dick knew the game was up now.

It would be useless to try to play it farther.

He had made a brave stand, but luck was against him.

Captain Park's eyes rested on Dick the first one, as he entered the cabin.

He paused and gave a start.

An expression of blank surprise crossed his face.

"Dick Slater, by all that is wonderful!" he exclaimed.

"I told you so!" cried the man who had been trying to convince the admiral that the youth was Dick Slater.

The admiral opened his eyes in wonder.

He turned and looked at Dick much after the fashion of a man looking at some rare and wonderful animal.

The audacity, the cool effrontery displayed by Dick in coming on board the ship in the first place, and the coolness shown by him when charged with being the patriot spy were amazing to the admiral.

He could not understand how it could be possible that any one could retain his composure and self-possession under such circumstances.

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed the admiral.

He almost gasped the words out.

"What are you up to now, Slater?" asked Captain Parks.

"Oh, nothing much, captain," replied Dick, coolly.

Dick was seemingly paying no attention to his surroundings, but in reality he was sizing up the chances for making his escape by means of a sudden dash.

He decided that it would be impossible to escape, however, as there were a dozen men in the outer cabin, and no doubt the deck was covered with more men.

"I guess I'm in for it," thought Dick; "well, it can't be helped."

The youth was terribly disappointed.

He had hoped to have his scheme go through without detection, and to capture the second installment of gold.

But now this would have to be given up.

He would be made a prisoner, and would be unable to get the news of the sending of the gold to the patriot army in time.

The admiral looked from Dick to Captain Parks.

"Then this really is the youth known as Dick Slater, the rebel spy?" he asked.

"He and no other, admiral," was the captain's reply.

"What has he been trying to do here?"

Had Admiral Howe been "up" in Twentieth Century slang, he might have replied that Dick had been trying to "do" him, but he wasn't so versed, and he said:

"He came in here pretending to be a messenger from my brother at New Brunswick. He had a letter from my brother, but it seems that he took it from this man here, who was the real messenger, and whom this young man captured and changed clothes with," and the admiral pointed to the fellow whom Dick had captured on the road between New Brunswick and New York.

"That's just like him," said Captain Parks. "He will do and dare anything, in order to get to strike a blow at the British."

"Well, it rather beats me!" said the admiral; "I did not believe more than half the stories I have heard regarding this young man, but I shall be inclined to believe, now, that one-half of it has not yet been told!"

"And I think you will be right about it, too, admiral," said Captain Parks. "Did you know that your brother has offered five hundred pounds reward for the capture of this young man?"

"No, I was not aware of it."

"It is a fact just the same; so you can judge from that whether or not your brother considers the young man dangerous."

"So I can. Well, then I am five hundred pounds richer, am I not?" with a smile. "That will be a joke, won't it! Imagine my brother's face when I present my bill for the five hundred pounds—ha, ha, ha!" and the admiral lay back in his chair and laughed heartily.

He was feeling happy, anyway.

Here he had in his power the greatest spy of the patriot army!

There was no doubt regarding that.

Dick was in the cabin and on board a ship, and on that ship were several hundred strong men, each and every one ready to do the bidding of their commander.

All the admiral had to do was to give the order, and Dick would be a prisoner in a twinkling.

So the admiral believed.

And so believing, he was in no hurry to give the order.

He was like the cat with the mouse.

He would play with his helpless victim awhile before making him a prisoner.

Captain Parks and the other men present laughed also.

They were in duty bound to do so.

It would never do to let the admiral make a joke, and then not laugh at it.

This would cause them to be disliked by the admiral.



So they ha, ha, ha-ed as heartily as the admiral himself had done.

"It will be a great joke on your brother, admiral!" said Captain Parks.

"So it will—ha, ha, ha!" and the admiral laughed till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

"There is one thing, however," the admiral continued; "the Crown may refuse to allow me to receive the reward, on the score that as it was offered by one brother and earned by another, it was a pre-arranged affair, for the purpose of making money—ha, ha, ha!" and the admiral laughed some more.

Captain Parks laughed also, and said that was another good joke.

While they were talking and laughing, Dick was thinking.

"How I should like to make my escape!" he thought. "Wouldn't it be a joke on the admiral!"

He looked all around the cabin carefully.

He could see no possible chance for escaping, however.

The only way out of the cabin was by way of the door, and it was occupied by several men.

Then, Captain Parks and the original messenger were between him and the door.

No, it seemed folly to think of trying to make a break for liberty.

"It would result in failure," thought Dick; "and I would get some hard thumps in the bargain. No, I had better submit gracefully to the inevitable."

"It won't do, Slater," smiled Captain Parks, who was watching Dick closely; "you can't escape. You might as well make up your mind to that, first as last!"

The captain knew him better than any one else present knew him.

He was well aware that Dick had more than once made his escape from places where escape seemed impossible.

He was well aware that for daring the youth had no equal.

If there was the least hope of being able to make his escape, Dick would make the attempt, the captain knew.

Therefore he had kept his eyes on the youth, and saw what the others had not seen—that Dick was looking about, and calculating the chances for making his escape.

Dick smiled.

"I guess you are right, captain," he said, quietly; "well, it can't be helped."

"Of course he can't escape!" said the admiral.

Then he called one of his officers whom he saw standing just through the doorway in the other room.

"Make this young man a prisoner, Jackson!" he said, motioning toward Dick.

"Yes, your excellency!" the man replied.

He entered the cabin, and, approaching Dick, said:

"Will you go with me quietly, young fellow? Or shall I be forced to use force?"

"I will go quietly," replied Dick.

Then he rose and walked out of the cabin with the man who had hold of his arm.

"Hold tight, Jackson," advised Parks; "he is the most slippery young chap you ever had anything to do with."

"He won't get away from me," said Jackson.

Dick smiled to himself and thought of how easily he could have made his escape had Jackson been all that stood between him and liberty.

When they reached the deck Dick looked swiftly around him.

Men were on every hand.

They seemed to know what was going on, too, and were watching the youth closely.

"It would be folly to try to make my escape at this time," thought Dick; "I will have to submit for the present and depend on making my escape later on."

Fifteen minutes later he was a prisoner in a dark room away down in the hold of the ship.

## CHAPTER VII.

### DICK A PRISONER.

Dick was left alone with his reflections.

It was dark as twilight.

There was only one place where the light could come into the room, and that was through a porthole high up at one side.

Dick's hands were manacled.

Otherwise he was unhampered.

The youth was far from being in a despairing mood, however.

There was one thing that made him feel in very good spirits.

The manacles which were on his wrists were somewhat large, and he could free himself in a few moments by slipping his hands out.

He felt that he might be enabled to make his escape through this happy accident.

As soon as night should come he would make the attempt to escape.



It would not do to attempt it until then.

Doubtless he would be visited a number of times during the afternoon.

So it would not be advisable to make any attempt until in the evening.

Dick's eyes were on the porthole.

Was it large enough to permit the passage of his body, he wondered.

He could not determine this without trying, and he decided to wait.

He would have to be patient.

Dick thought of how his plans had been nipped in the bud.

"It is too bad!" he thought. "How I should have enjoyed capturing the second installment of gold! It would have been a great help to the patriot cause—and how delighted General Washington would have been, to be sure!"

Then a thought came to Dick:

Might he not be able to make a success of his scheme even yet?

Would not Admiral Howe send the gold?

Dick believed that he would.

And now that he had succeeded in making a prisoner of Dick, he would not be afraid that the "rebels" would get wind of the fact that the gold was to be sent and try to capture it.

Therefore there would be no unusual precautions taken.

And without a doubt the gold would be sent as the other had—down to the old house near Perth Amboy by boat, and be taken from there to New Brunswick by wagon.

Dick got to figuring in his mind.

If the gold was sent by boat, and the boat was to leave after nightfall, he believed he might, if he escaped early in the evening, be able to reach Middlebrook, where the patriot army was, get his company of "Liberty Boys" and get back to the old house in time to capture the gold.

It would be worth trying, anyway.

Dick was not so cast down as would well have been expected from one in his situation.

The hope of escape and of turning the tables on the enemy was quite sufficient to keep up his spirits.

He was a youth who was not given to repining, anyway.

No matter what the situation, he always made the most of it.

Repining and feeling blue would not help him.

So Dick always managed to keep his spirits up.

Admiral Howe came down and had a talk with him about the middle of the afternoon.

The admiral thought that he might worm some facts out

of Dick regarding General Washington and the patriot army.

His efforts were clumsy, and Dick smiled inwardly.

The youth made use of his opportunity, and while pretending to drop some information unwittingly, he managed to convey to the mind of the admiral exaggerated ideas regarding the strength of the patriot army.

It was a case of diamond cut diamond, and Dick's diamond was the brighter, keener, sharper.

He fooled the admiral completely, yet with such consummate cunning that the admiral went back up to his cabin thinking he had wormed some valuable information out of the youth.

"Well, he's welcome to all he got out of me!" thought Dick, as the admiral took his departure.

So both Dick and the admiral were well satisfied with the result of the interview.

One thing that pleased Dick greatly was the fact that the admiral had openly stated that he was going to send the gold, as his brother had requested.

In fact, the admiral had told Dick this in a spirit of triumph in order to make the youth feel bad.

It had had quite the opposite effect.

Dick was delighted to learn this, of a certainty.

He had supposed that the admiral would send the gold, but to know it was to be absolutely sure of it.

Another thing; Dick had learned, by ingenious questioning, that the gold was to be sent away by boat, and would be sent away at nine o'clock that night.

The knowledge gave Dick great pleasure.

The boat would not reach the old house near Perth Amboy before half-past eleven, and Dick was sure that, if he could escape from his prison early in the evening, he could, by riding hard, reach Middlebrook, get his company of "Liberty Boys" and get to the old house in time to capture the gold.

Ah, if he could only do this!

It would be a great triumph over the British admiral.

And Dick was determined to score the triumph.

He would do so, if such a thing was possible.

And he thought it was.

He would not believe otherwise until after he had tried and failed, anyway.

He did not intend that he should fail.

He had always been successful.

He was determined that this should not be a failure.

He took matters as easy as possible until supper time.

When his supper was brought down to him, he ate it.



His appetite was so good that the man who had brought him the food seemed surprised.

He seemed hardly to know what to think about it.

He spoke of it to Dick, and the youth smiled.

"The appetites of prisoners are as a rule not good, then?" he asked.

"Not as a rule."

"Well, I'm an exception to the rule."

"You seem to be, that's a fact!"

Dick smiled.

"Well, I'm young and healthy," he said; "and I must eat."

The man went away when Dick had finished, looking as though somewhat impressed with the coolness and self-possession of the prisoner.

Dick waited impatiently for the sun to go down.

As soon as it became twilight, he would go to work.

He did not wish to spoil his chances by beginning work too early.

At last the sun went down.

Dick could not see the sun, but he knew when it sank to rest.

He could tell by the shadow which settled over the sky—or such portion of the sky as he could see from the porthole.

Then he began work.

The first thing he did was to slip the manacles off his wrists.

This was not a difficult task.

But it took some little time.

Dick had to work the manacles off gradually.

Ten minutes of work relieved him of the troublesome irons, however.

Now to get out of the prison!

This, Dick knew, was going to be the most difficult part of the affair.

The porthole might prove to be too small to permit the passage of his body.

In that case he would be unable to escape.

But if the porthole would permit of the passage of his body, he might make his escape, though even then there would be great danger, as there were men on watch on the deck above, and he could hardly hope to escape without being seen.

He would try, however.

Dick laid the manacles down, and then began his preparations for leaving the place.

There was a small table in the room.

He dragged this table over and placed it directly be-

neath the point where the porthole was cut out in the side of the vessel.

Dick then climbed up on top of the table and examined the porthole.

He believed it would permit the passage of his body.

This decided, the next thing to do was to see if he could manage to execute the maneuver.

He went to work.

The porthole was still at a considerable height above the table.

It was, in fact, at about the height of Dick's shoulders.

He stuck his head out and took a survey of the surroundings.

There were a number of ships close by, and on their decks were men who might see him if he attempted to escape before it became fully dark.

He decided that it would be better to wait awhile longer.

After it had become entirely dark, he would slip through the porthole and drop into the water and swim to the shore.

Of course this would be dangerous.

But Dick did not stop to count the danger.

He would make the attempt to escape, no matter if he had to run the gauntlet of firing from a hundred muskets.

It seemed to grow dark very slowly.

Dick was impatient to be away.

He wanted to make sure of getting to Middlebrook in time and capturing the second lot of gold.

What a triumph it would be if he could escape and succeed in doing this!

Dick enjoyed it in prospect.

He could see the anger and consternation, as well as discomfiture on the florid face of Admiral Howe.

He could in his mind's eye see General Howe pacing his quarters like a caged lion.

No harder blow could be struck the British, just at this time, than the capture of the gold.

It would discourage the British troops at New Brunswick, and make them unruly and unwilling to try to make headway against Washington's army.

They wanted at least a portion of their pay, and would do nothing until they got it.

Gradually it grew darker outside.

Twilight was being followed by the thick darkness of night.

"It will soon be dark enough for me to begin work," thought Dick.

He waited a few minutes longer.



Then he got ready to begin the attempt at escape.

"Every minute is precious!" he thought. "A delay of five minutes here might mean the loss of the chance to capture the gold. I will hurry!"

He climbed up on top of the table and stuck his head out through the porthole.

"Yes, the gold is to be sent down by boat at nine o'clock, and I'm to go with it," said a voice, right above Dick.

He gave a start and looked upward.

He could not see any one, but realized that there must be a couple of men at the rail of the ship, directly above where he was.

"Jove! I wish they would go away!" he thought; "I don't wish to take chances on trying to get out of here while they are there. If they failed to see me, they would certainly hear the splash as I struck the water."

The voices remained audible to Dick for a few minutes, and then he heard them become fainter, and he heard also the sound of receding footsteps.

"I guess they are gone and the coast is clear!" thought Dick; "now to escape!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### DICK ESCAPES.

Dick begun work at once.

He had given the matter considerable thought.

He knew that he would have to go through the porthole feet first.

All around the porthole on the outside was nothing but the smooth side of the ship.

There was absolutely nothing to take hold of with the hands.

If he was to climb through headfirst, he would be forced to fall in an awkward manner and might hurt himself.

But by working his way out feet first, he could work his body entirely through the porthole, and then hold to the edge and let himself down at arm's length.

Then he could drop feet first into the water.

The distance would not be so great by doing this way.

And he would be much less liable to hurt himself.

He proceeded to do this.

It was hard work working his body through the porthole.

The hole was but little larger than Dick's body.

The fit was so tight indeed that he almost got wedged on two or three occasions.

He managed to release himself, however, each time, and gradually worked his body through.

His shoulders stuck.

The youth worked away desperately to free them and force them on through.

It was hard work to accomplish anything.

For awhile he thought he would be unable to get loose at all.

He feared he would have to hang there perhaps for hours, until some one came and pulled him back into the place from which he was trying to escape.

This would have been terrible.

Dick felt that the discomfiture would all be on his side, then.

Admiral Howe would be the one who would feel happy.

The thought that his purpose might be frustrated, that he might be unable to escape and capture the gold, filled Dick with a feeling akin to desperation.

It should not be!

He would escape!

He would get through the porthole, or know the reason why!

He worked desperately.

For a time even his most desperate efforts seemed to be of no use.

He rested a few minutes and tried it again.

"I'm afraid this beautiful uniform will be ruined!" thought Dick; and he could not help smiling that such a thought should occur to him at such a moment.

"If I had removed the coat, I would now be all right," he thought. "But I did not remove it, and now I shall have to get through with it or not at all."

He kept at work.

He must get through—he would get through!

He kept twisting and working.

At last!

He had moved his body slightly.

He felt that his shoulders would go through after all.

The thought gave him renewed strength.

He worked eagerly, almost fiercely.

He had already lost many precious minutes.

He would lose no more than was absolutely unavoidable.

Presently he felt that his shoulders were almost through.

He gave one powerful, twisting wrench.

His shoulders went through the opening!

Dick would have fallen downward to the water of the bay, had he not caught the wood at the side of the porthole.

He caught hold just in time.



Then he hung there, feet downward, for a few moments. Dick looked down.

He could not see the water.

He knew about how far it was to the water, however.

"It can't be more than fifteen feet," he thought.

This distance ought not to injure him.

He had often dropped farther than that and alighted on solid ground without sustaining injury; certainly he could do so and alight in water.

Dick was not afraid of being hurt by the drop.

What he was afraid of was that the sentinel on the deck might hear him when he struck the water, and suspect that the prisoner was escaping.

He would then, of course, look to see whether or not the prisoner was safe, and discover of a certainty that he had escaped.

Dick was afraid that, in case they did discover this, they might decide to send the gold in some way, by some other route, being afraid he might reach the patriot army and try to capture the gold.

Or they might decide to not send the gold at all—on this night.

This would be a great disappointment to him.

All these things flashed through Dick's mind in an instant, as it were.

Then he let go.

Downward he shot.

An instant later he struck the water.

There was a splash.

But not as big a splash as Dick had feared there might be.

Under the water Dick went, going down at least ten feet.

This did not worry him, however.

He was a fine swimmer and diver.

He was almost as much at home in the water as a duck. He had no fears of drowning.

He made a few strong strokes, and was at the surface again in a jiffy.

He shook the water out of his ears and listened.

There came the sound of voices from the deck of the ship.

"What was it?" he heard one voice say.

"I don't know," was the reply.

"You say you heard a splash?"

"Yes."

"A loud one?"

"Well, no; not very."

"Oh, it was nothing more than a fish leaping out of the water and falling back again, I should say."

"Perhaps that was what it was."

"Yes, without doubt. Go to your station."

"Good!" thought Dick; "so they thought it was the splash of a fish! Well, they'd be surprised if they knew what kind of a fish it was!"

Then Dick struck out, through the water.

He had a long swim ahead of him.

It was more than a mile to the point where he had rented the boat.

As that was where he had left his horse, he intended going straight there.

If his horse was still there, as he hoped it was, he would not have to lose much time.

He had to be careful, however.

Several of the ships of the admiral's fleet lay between him and the shore at the point he was aiming for.

He would have to pass these ships.

He might be discovered in doing so.

He would have to swim very quietly and carefully, to avoid making noise enough to attract attention.

This the youth did.

He was a skillful swimmer.

He could force his way through the water rapidly and yet make but very little splashing sound.

It was dark enough so that he could not see the hulls of the great ships until he was almost against them.

Then he would swim around the ship and continue on his way.

At last, to his relief, he found that he had got past all the ships.

He would have a clear field, and be in no danger of discovery from the sentinels on the ships' decks.

He wondered if his horse would be where he left it.

"Surely it will be," he thought; "the ferryman will take care of it. He will hold the horse as security for the boat which he let me have."

This thought made Dick feel better.

He was sure his horse would be there in readiness for him.

Of course he would have to pay for the boat.

It had been hoisted onto the deck of the ship, when Dick was made prisoner, and the redcoats would no doubt keep it.

The clothing which Dick wore became thoroughly soaked with the water as soon as he struck the water, of course, and this made it weigh down upon the gallant young swimmer.



It was quite different from swimming without clothing on.

But Dick was strong, and he persevered.

He could not let such a little thing as fatigue stand in his way.

It was not for him to become weary.

Or, becoming weary, it was his place to pay no attention to the fact.

He must keep right on, just the same.

This Dick did.

He became very tired, but he gritted his teeth.

Any one to have seen him swimming, with regular, powerful strokes would have thought him fresh and unwearied.

But they would have been mistaken.

Nevertheless the youth swam with undiminished speed.

What he lacked in strength he made up in will power.

He simply would not allow his brain to realize that he was tired, and forced his arms and legs to continue their work.

It was triumph of mind over matter.

Onward he swam.

He begun to wonder if he was going in the right direction.

It would be easy to go wrong in the darkness.

There was no great flare of gas and electric lights in New York then, as there is now, to guide him.

He thought that he saw faint lights in the direction which he imagined the city must lie, but he could not be sure of it.

"Well, just so I don't miss my way completely, and land on Staten Island or get out into the ocean!" thought Dick.

Then he began to wonder how much farther it was to the shore.

It seemed to him as if he had gone almost far enough.

A mile is a long distance to swim, however, under any circumstances, and it certainly seems longer when the swimmer is hampered with clothing.

"I'll get to the shore pretty soon, though, I think," said Dick to himself, and he kept at work.

It was more than a quarter of an hour later that he reached the shore, however, and then found that he was quite a little out of the way.

He had missed the point where the man kept the boats for rent quite a bit.

He was puzzled slightly to know which way to go to reach the place.

At last he decided that he would go to the right and risk it.

This he did, and after a walk of five minutes, he came to the house of the man who kept the boats for rent.

Dick knocked on the door.

There was a few minutes of waiting and then the door opened.

The old boatman stood there, holding a bit of tallow candle.

"Who air ye?" he asked, "and whut d'ye want?"

"I'm the man who rented a boat of you to-day," replied Dick. "I have come back, and wish to pay you for the boat, and get my horse."

The boatman looked at Dick's dripping clothing.

"W'y, yer all wet!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," replied Dick; "a schooner or something ran into me, out in the bay a ways, and stove in the side of your boat. I had to swim ashore."

"Oh, thet's it, hey?"

"Yes, and now if you will put a price on your boat, I will pay it, take my horse and be on my way back to rejoin the army."

The old boatman named a sum which seemed reasonable to Dick, and he paid it, and then asked where his horse was.

"I'll git the hoss fur ye, sir," the old man said, and he led the way to an old stable which stood a ways from the house, and brought out the horse.

"I fed 'im an' took good keer uv 'im, sir," the old man said.

"Thank you!" said Dick, and then he bridled and saddled the horse as quickly as possible, and mounting, bade the old boatman good night and rode away in the direction of Middlebrook and the patriot army.

"Now to get back and get my company of 'Liberty Boys' and go to the old house on the shore near Perth Amboy and capture the gold!" thought Dick, as he put spurs to the horse.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DICK'S QUICK TRIP.

Dick judged that it must be about half-past eight o'clock.

The distance from Paulus Hook to Middlebrook was at least twenty-five miles.

He would have to ride to Middlebrook, get his "Liberty



Boys" and ride to the old house near Perth Amboy, a distance of sixteen miles from Middlebrok, and do all this in three and a half hours.

Could he do it?

Dick hardly knew.

He could try, however.

It would be hard on his horse, but he thought that the importance of the matter required the sacrifice of the horse, if this was necessary.

So he put spurs to the animal, and rode at a swift gallop.

Mile after mile was gone over.

The horse soon proved itself to be possessed of uncommon staying powers for a brute that did not look like a superior animal.

This was pleasing to Dick.

It gave him hope that he might succeed in his undertaking after all.

He figured that he was going at the rate of twelve miles an hour.

This, if maintained, would enable him to reach Middlebrook in a little more than two hours time.

This would leave him an hour and a half to get his "Liberty Boys" and reach the old house near Perth Amboy.

That would be sufficient, he thought.

Onward he rode.

Mile after mile passed swiftly.

Each mile brought him nearer to his destination, and with each mile that was left behind Dick's spirits rose.

"I will reach there in time!" he thought; "ah! how I hope we shall be able to capture this second installment of gold! It will be a big blow to the British, and a big help to the patriots."

On, on, galloped the horse.

Dick had traveled the road so frequently that he knew it well.

There was no danger of his losing his way and losing time.

He knew the shortest and most direct route, and was going that way.

He kept a sharp lookout, however.

He was traversing a section of country infested by the British.

He might run upon a prowling band of foragers at any moment.

So it stood him in hand to be careful.

To have been captured now, after making such a grand effort to escape and turn the tables on the British by capturing the gold which they were to send to New Brunswick, would have been terrible.

Had he met any of the redcoats Dick would have made a desperate effort to escape, before he would have submitted to capture.

But luckily he did not encounter any of the redcoats.

If any were in the vicinity he missed them.

Dick was, of course, very glad of this.

It suited him exactly.

At last he reached Middlebrook.

His horse was panting, and reeking with perspiration.

Dick leaped off, patted the horse on the neck, and saying, "Good horse!" called to a man who did odd jobs of work for the "Liberty Boys," and gave the horse into his charge.

"Rub him down and take good care of him, Johnson," said Dick; "he has carried me twenty-five miles in two hours!"

"All right, sir," was the reply, and Johnson led the panting horse away.

Dick hastened into the quarters occupied by his company of "Liberty Boys."

They were all there, and some of them had lain down for the night; but the majority were still sitting up, telling stories and having a jolly time.

When they saw Dick, exclamations escaped them.

They were surprised to see him.

And they knew from his excited look that something important was on the tapis.

"What is it, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook, his dearest boy friend. "What's up, now?"

"Tell us, quick!" from Sam Sunderland.

"I hope there is work for us!" said Mark Morrison.

"There is work, and lively work, boys!" cried Dick.

"What kind of work, Dick?" from Bob.

"You remember what we did last night?"

"Captured the gold the British were sending down to New Brunswick—yes!"

"Well, we have a chance to duplicate that feat! They are sending down another installment to-night, and if you boys can get ready quickly enough, we will go over and capture the gold!"

The boys leaped to their feet in a hurry.

They uttered exclamations of astonishment and delight.

"We'll be ready in less than no time at all, Dick!" said Bob.

"Yes, yes!" from the others in chorus.

"All right; hurry, then, and I will run over to headquarters and speak to the commander-in-chief and get his permission to go and make the attempt to capture the gold."



"All right! we'll be ready by the time you get back."

"And hurry back, Dick!"

"I will be back in a few minutes."

Dick left the quarters.

He hurried over to Washington's headquarters.

To the orderly he said:

"Has the commander-in-chief retired?"

"No, sir; he is still up," was the reply.

"Good! Tell him Dick Slater wishes to see him a few minutes on important business."

"Very well," said the orderly; "step inside."

Dick entered, and a few moments later the orderly returned with the information that the commander-in-chief would see him at once.

Dick was ushered into the room occupied by General Washington, and the great man greeted Dick pleasantly.

"So you have got back?" he remarked; "well, did you learn aught of interest?"

"Yes, indeed, your excellency!"

And then Dick told the commander-in-chief very briefly where he had been and what he had discovered.

"Well, well!" exclaimed Washington; "so they are going to send another installment of gold to-night, are they? And you wish to go and try to capture it?"

Dick nodded.

"Yes, your excellency."

The great man seemed well pleased.

"Very well; you shall do so!" he said; "take your 'Liberty Boys' and go and capture the gold, if you can. It will be very acceptable if we can secure it."

"Thank you, sir!" said Dick, earnestly; "I think we can secure it. We will try hard, at any rate."

"I know that, Dick."

Dick did not remain long.

"If we are to reach the old house near Perth Amboy in time, we shall have to hasten," he said; "so I had better be going."

"Yes, go along, my boy; and success to you and your brave 'Liberty Boys!'"

"Thank you!"

Then Dick saluted and withdrew.

Then he hastened back to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys."

He found the entire company out in front of the quarters, each holding his horse, ready to mount the instant the order was given.

Bob was holding two horses—one for himself and one for Dick.

"It's all right, boys!" cried Dick; "we're to go, and do the best we can. Mount!"

The youths mounted quickly.

Then Dick and Bob took the lead, and the company rode away into the darkness.

They headed for Perth Amboy.

They were well acquainted with the road, so could ride rapidly.

They had raced and chased around in this part of the country so much during the past few months that they were well versed in the lay of the land.

By the nearest route it was about sixteen miles to Perth Amboy.

They would have to ride swiftly to reach there in an hour and a half.

That the gold would reach the old house by midnight, Dick was sure.

There would be little or no delay in transferring it into the wagon and starting to New Brunswick with it, consequently they would have to be at the old house a little before midnight.

They rode rapidly.

The horses were kept at a gallop.

This was absolutely necessary.

And even then it lacked only a few minutes of being midnight when they reached the old house where the gold was to be delivered from the boat.

The youths did as they had done on the night before.

They dismounted a couple of hundred yards from the house and walked to it.

A feeling of disappointment took possession of them as they neared the building.

All was quiet around the house.

There were no signs of the redcoats.

The wagon and team were not in sight.

In fact the house seemed deserted.

The youths hastened forward and tried the door of the house.

It opened readily.

They entered.

The house was vacant.

There was nobody there.

"What does it mean, Dick?" asked Bob.

"I don't know what it means, Bob. It means one of three things, but I don't know which."

"What are the three things?"

"First: Either they changed their plans, and sent the gold by some other route——"

"Yes?"



"Or, secondly: They have not yet arrived here——"

"Yes?"

"Or, thirdly: They have been here and have gone!"

"And in that case?"

"They are on their way to New Brunswick by the nearest route."

"And in that case why could we not catch them?"

"We can at least try, Bob."

"Then you think——"

"That they have been here and gone?—yes."

"And you think we can overhaul them?"

"If they haven't secured too big a start. It is ten miles to New Brunswick, and they cannot go fast with a heavy wagon."

"Then you are inclined to think we have a chance?"

"Yes, if we hurry."

Then Dick gave the order:

"Back to where we left our horses, boys! Double-quick!"

The youths broke into a run.

It was a race to see who could get back to where they had left the horses first.

It took but a few minutes to reach the horses and mount and then Dick gave the order:

"Forward!"

He and Bob were in front.

They rode at a gallop, and behind them came the other "Liberty Boys."

The youths were eager to overtake the redcoats who were taking the gold to New Brunswick.

It would be a big triumph if they could do so, and capture the gold and the redcoats with it.

Dick knew the shortest and best road to New Brunswick.

Being the shortest and best road, it was the one most likely to be chosen by the redcoats.

Dick led the way at a gallop.

He was eager to sight the wagon and its convoy.

If the British had not secured much of a start, they might sight them at almost any moment.

The moon was now shining, and it would be possible to see the wagon and soldiers a distance of a quarter of a mile.

So they kept their eyes turned ahead.

They were eager to catch a sight of their wished-for prey.

Onward they galloped.

At least three miles had been traversed.

And still they had seen nothing of the British.

They entered a strip of timber.

It was perhaps half a mile wide.

It extended northward from the Raritan River.

There was heavy timber to the left, along the river, all the way from Perth Amboy to New Brunswick.

It was quite dark in the timber, and they had to slow down.

It was lucky for them that they did so.

Had they not, they would have run onto the British who were taking the gold to New Brunswick before the open country beyond the timber was reached.

As it was, just as they emerged from the timber, they saw their intended prey in the road ahead of them.

"There they are!" said Dick, in low, intense voice; "forward all!"

## CHAPTER X.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" CAPTURE THE GOLD.

The youths obeyed the order instantly.

They rode forward at a gallop.

The British heard the sound made by the hoofs of the horses ridden by the "Liberty Boys."

Doubtless they had not thought of such a thing as that they were in danger.

So the fact that they were pursued came as a shock to them.

They lashed the horses attached to the wagon into a gallop.

They were heavy farm horses, however, and could not go very fast.

The British who were escorting the gold—about a dozen in number—fell behind the wagon, and evidently intended trying to fight their pursuers off.

They could not hope to succeed, however, against seven or eight times their number.

Soon the "Liberty Boys" were close up to the redcoats.

"Halt!" cried Dick, in a loud, clear ringing voice; "halt and surrender!"

The answer came promptly.

It wasn't the announcement of the surrender of the redcoats, either.

They did not intend to surrender until they were forced to do so.

Instead of halting and announcing that they surrendered, they kept on going, and Dick and his companions heard the command:

"Fire!"



The next instant there came the crash of a dozen pistol shots.

Dick felt one bullet cut through his clothing and graze the skin.

Another of the boys was slightly wounded.

"Fire!" cried Dick.

He did not wish to lose any of his "Liberty Boys," and the only way to bring the redcoats to terms would be to use severe measures.

Crash—roar!

The muskets were discharged, and a mingling chorus of yells, curses and cries of pain went up from the British.

Half the members of the little party went down to the ground, off their horses, either killed or wounded.

"Surrender!" cried Dick, in a stern voice; "surrender, or die!"

The British decided to surrender.

The commander of the little party called out that they surrendered.

"Good!" cried Dick, as he galloped forward, followed by his "Liberty Boys." "That is the wise thing to do!"

The wagon had been brought to a stop.

The driver knew it was useless to think of trying to escape from the horsemen with the clumsy wagon and the big farm horses.

The weapons of the redcoats were taken from them.

Then they were made prisoners.

Their hands were tied together behind their backs, and their feet bound closely, so they could not walk, and then they were bundled into the wagon.

Dick first looked and saw that the gold was there.

It was in a large iron-bound chest, under the seat occupied by the driver.

As the redcoats were being loaded into the wagon, the commander of the redcoats bemoaned their fate.

"How did you know the gold was to be sent?" he asked, when he saw Dick had looked in the chest.

"I was present on board Admiral Howe's ship, and heard him say the gold was to be sent," replied Dick, quietly.

"You were present!"

"Yes."

"Impossible!"

Dick shook his head.

"Oh, no; not impossible," he replied, quietly. "I was there."

"Who are you?"

"I am Dick Slater, at your service."

"What! Dick Slater? Impossible! Dick Slater is a

prisoner on board Admiral Howe's ship at this very moment!"

"You are mistaken," said Dick, quietly; "I was there, but am not there now."

"You don't mean to say you escaped!"

The man fairly gasped the words.

"That is what I mean," replied Dick, quietly, and then he turned to Sam Sunderland and said:

"Sam, get up in the seat here and drive, will you? We must be getting back toward Middlebrook. The sound of this firing must have been heard at New Brunswick, and some of the British will be coming out this way soon."

"All right, Dick!"

Sam leaped up into the seat and took hold of the lines.

He turned the team around, with some difficulty, as the road was not very wide, and then headed in the other direction.

There was a cross-road half a mile back.

The cross-road ran north and south.

It was Dick's idea to follow this road in a northerly direction for a couple of miles, as that would lead them practically away from the direction of the British encampment at New Brunswick. Then they could turn westward, and go toward Middlebrook.

The "Liberty Boys" fell in behind the wagon, and the start was made.

"It'll be strange if we don't have a brush with some redcoats before reaching Middlebrook," said Bob, as he rode along beside Dick.

So it will, Bob," acquiesced Dick.

"They will certainly send out a few parties to see what the firing was about, don't you think?"

"I think so."

"Well, we'll give 'em a warm reception, if any of them get within musket-shot distance of us!"

"That's right, Bob!"

The "Liberty Boys" made as good time as they could. Of course, they had to gauge their speed by the speed at which the team could pull the wagon.

The wagon was the main thing, and must not be left behind.

They were soon at the cross-road, and turning, they made their way northward.

They went in this direction perhaps two miles.

Then they turned to the westward.

That was the direction to go to reach Middlebrook.

They made as rapid progress as possible.

They still had about ten miles to go.

They kept a sharp lookout toward the rear.



They expected to be followed by the redcoats.

In this they were right.

They had gone perhaps two miles farther when they saw the outlines of horsemen some distance in the rear.

"They are after us!" cried Bob.

"Yes, they are coming," said Dick. "We must give them a warm reception."

The youths got ready to do this.

It proved to be a company of British dragoons.

They were equal in number to the "Liberty Boys."

But they had sabres instead of muskets, and would have to come to close quarters if they did much damage.

Of course, they had pistols, but they are short distance weapons, also.

The fight soon begun, however.

The dragoons came up close enough to fire a volley from their pistols.

The volley did no particular damage.

Two or three of the "Liberty Boys" were wounded, but none of the wounds were serious.

Then Dick gave the order to fire.

Crash—roar!

When the muskets spoke, there was some result apparent.

The sounds of cries, groans, and curses came to the ears of the "Liberty Boys."

"That was a good volley!" cried Dick; "forward! and fire with the pistols!"

The youths charged down toward the demoralized redcoats.

They waited till they were close upon the dragoons.

Then Dick gave the order to fire.

A volley rang out.

This threw the redcoats into still greater confusion.

They attempted to return the fire, but as only a portion of their number fired, and they were in a more or less demoralized condition, the volley did but very little damage.

Dick followed the advantage which they had gained.

He ordered the "Liberty Boys" to fire another volley.

They did so.

This threw the redcoats into even worse confusion.

"Now, charge bayonets!" he cried.

The "Liberty Boys" gave vent to cheers, and charged down upon the redcoats.

They charged with such resistless energy and fury that the redcoats were terribly frightened.

They did not try to stand their ground, so to speak.

They broke and fled.

It became a complete rout.

It was every fellow for himself.

Dick did not let his "Liberty Boys" follow the fleeing redcoats far.

He did not think it good policy.

What he wished, more than all else, was to get safely to Middlebrook with the gold and the prisoners they had already secured.

If they were to lose time chasing this company of dragoons, they might find themselves in trouble before reaching their destination.

Dick was as cautious as well as a brave youth.

So he ordered the youths to return to where the wagon had been left.

The journey was resumed at once.

As good luck would have it, they did not see any more redcoats.

They reached Middlebrook in safety.

It was about four o'clock when they got there, so they did not report to the commander-in-chief until after breakfast.

When Dick called on General Washington at his headquarters and told him that they had been successful and had captured the gold and some more prisoners, the great man was delighted.

He complimented Dick highly.

He praised all the "Liberty Boys."

"You have done a wonderful thing, Dick!" he said. "What you have done will be of inestimable value to the patriot cause. I don't see how I can ever thank you enough!"

"The knowledge that we have done something that will benefit the great Cause is all that we wish," said Dick, modestly. "We are happy to have been able to do this."

Then the commander-in-chief went with Dick and took a look at the gold.

"There is fully as much as there was in the first lot," he said, a pleased look on his face.

"I judge that there is about the same amount, your excellency," said Dick.

"Yes; there must be twenty thousand pounds—that makes forty thousand you have captured!"

"I wish we could capture forty thousand more!" smiled Dick.

"They'll send a regiment along with the next installment of gold!" laughed Bob Estabrook, and Washington nodded.

"Yes; they will certainly take warning from this experience," he said. "I should have thought they would send more than a dozen men with this second installment."



"But they didn't, luckily for us," said Dick.

The news of the capture of the second installment of British gold by the "Liberty Boys" was soon all over the camp, and the boys were praised and complimented on every side, for the men were not jealous of the "Liberty Boys."

In truth, the men thought the world and all of the youths, and regarded them as the best and bravest soldiers in the patriot army.

"You'll have to look out, now, though," one man said, in speaking to Dick and Bob; "your company will be marked by the British, and they will do their best to capture you. You had better be careful how you venture away from the encampment to any distance."

"Oh, we're not afraid of the redcoats!" smiled Dick.

"Not a bit of it!" laughed Bob.

"Of course, I know you well enough to know you aren't afraid," the man said; "but you will have to be careful; the redcoats will be on the lookout for you and may set traps for you."

"If they do, we'll fool them!" said Dick. "We may be able to do a little something in the ruse line ourselves."

## CHAPTER XI.

### A CLEVER RUSE.

The "Liberty Boys" remained in the camp that day.

But next day they could contain themselves no longer.

They mounted their horses and rode away, having secured permission from General Washington to go on a scouting expedition.

"Be careful, though, Dick!" Washington had cautioned; "the British will be very angry over losing their gold, and will no doubt be on the lookout for you. If they could capture you and your company of 'Liberty Boys,' they would no doubt be happy."

"I do not doubt it," smiled Dick; "but we are not going to give them that pleasure if we can help it. Indeed, we will turn the tables on them if we get half a chance and will capture the men who would capture us."

"I hope it will turn out that way," said the commander-in-chief with a smile.

Then he shook hands with Dick and bade him good-by and good luck.

The youths rode away in the direction of New Brunswick, where the British army was stationed.

The "Liberty Boys" were nothing if not daring.

They were as brave as lions, but not foolhardy.

In battle, they fought with reckless bravery, but there was always cool judgment back of their work.

They did not go ahead blindly.

If there was anything to be gained by stubborn fighting, they would stand and fight to the last ditch, but if there was nothing particular to be gained, they did not stand and fight just for the mere sake of fighting to the finish.

They were working for the good of the Cause, and if they could do more for the Cause by retiring, so as to have a chance to fight to better advantage later on, they always retired.

So there was nothing of the foolhardy spirit in this action of theirs in riding toward New Brunswick.

Dick had a scheme in his mind.

He thought that by means of a ruse he might succeed in making a capture of some of the British.

He reasoned that there would be bands of redcoats out scouting the country for miles around in search of the "Liberty Boys."

He was sure this would be found to be the case.

So he had evolved a scheme which would, he believed, enable him to capture some of the redcoats.

The youths rode onward at a gallop.

It was only about ten miles from Middlebrook to New Brunswick.

So it did not take them more than an hour to reach a point within three or four miles of the British.

Dick was familiar with the country.

He knew of a place just suited to his purpose.

Presently they came to a stop in front of a gate leading into a field.

There was considerable timber about.

Beyond the gate a road led through the timber, down toward a hollow.

A couple of the youths leaped down and opened the gate.

Then the entire company of "Liberty Boys" rode through.

Dick rode ahead, and then they penetrated through the timber, along the road, which was simply a crooked lane leading through the timber.

Presently they reached the hollow.

They crossed it.

On the opposite side were rather steep bluffs.

They were rough, there being a great many large rocks and boulders.

There was a scraggy growth of timber, also some of the trees being of a very good size.



"Now, then, for the ruse which we will play on the redcoats, if they give us the chance!" said Dick.

The majority of the members of the company secreted the horses at a distance from the spot and went part way up the bluff.

They hid themselves behind the rocks, bowlders, and trees.

Ten of them remained down at the foot of the bluffs with Dick.

Dick now went to work.

He produced from the saddle-bags on his saddle an old suit of clothes such as is worn by country boys.

He quickly doffed his clothing and donned the suit of rough clothes.

Then he made his face dirty and rumbled up his hair.

Then he donned an old slouch hat.

Thus attired, he looked the Jersey farmer boy of that period of life.

Next Dick removed the saddle from the horse, and taking it up the bluff a ways, hid it behind a rock.

Then he came back down and mounted his horse.

"Come on, boys," he said.

The ten mounted their horses and followed Dick back to the gate opening out into the main road.

When they were out on the road, Dick turned to his companions.

"Now, boys," he said; "I guess you know what you are to do?"

"Yes," replied Bob; "we are to ride here and there in this vicinity and wait till we see a band of redcoats. Then we are to attract their attention by making pretended efforts to escape, after which we will ride back here as rapidly as possible and rejoin our comrades at the bluff. Then you appear and lead the British to our hiding-place—or tell them where we went, and we are to pepper 'em good when they show up!"

"That is the scheme," said Dick; "well, away with you, and I will hang around here and be ready to do my part when the time comes."

The youths rode away.

Dick rode up the road in the opposite direction, but did not go far.

He stopped at a point a quarter of a mile from the gate, and leading his horse in among the trees at the side of the road, tied him.

Then Dick waited as patiently as he could.

He made himself ready for a long siege.

It might be several hours before the youths would encounter any of the British.

Dick knew the value of patience, however.

He could practice patience when it was necessary to do so.

Of course, he hoped they would not have to wait so long for their game, but thought it even possible that they might not run across any redcoats at all.

This was not likely to happen, however.

There were scouting and foraging bands of redcoats over-running the country almost constantly.

Dick kept a sharp lookout up and down the road.

He had been in his hiding-place perhaps an hour, when he thought he saw horsemen coming from the direction in which the ten "Liberty Boys" had gone.

"I believe it is the boys coming back," thought Dick.

He quickly climbed a tree.

He could see plainly now.

More than half a mile away a little band of horsemen were coming as fast as they could make their horses go.

"That is the boys!" murmured Dick; "and—yes! yonder comes a company of redcoats in pursuit! But they are infantry."

This was a surprise to Dick.

Usually the scouting parties and foraging parties were mounted.

But these redcoats were afoot.

"So much the better," Dick thought; "it will give the boys plenty of time to get away from them and back to where the rest of the boys are hidden. And it will make it easier for me to reach the gate at the same time the redcoats do."

The youths reached the gate, and, passing through, closed the gate again and went on down the winding road through the timber.

"So far, so good!" thought Dick; "I believe my ruse will work nicely."

Dick waited until the redcoats were within a quarter of a mile of the gate, and then he mounted his horse.

He rode out of the timber and into the road.

Then he rode slowly along the road and managed to reach the gateway at the same time that the redcoats reached it.

It was a company, with a captain in command.

Dick was glad to see that the captain was a stranger to him.

As Dick rode up, the officer addressed him eagerly.

"Did you see some rebels on horseback going along the road as you came along?" he asked.

"Was they rebels?" asked Dick, with a stolid face.

"Yes, yes! Did you see them?"



"Yes, I saw them rebels!"

"You did?"

"Yes."

"Where were they? Did you meet them as you came long?"

"No," replied Dick, stolidly; "I didn't meet 'em, but I saw 'em. Say, have ye seen ennything uv two red cows? They hev strayed away."

"No; no! we haven't seen any cows. We're looking for a bigger game. If you saw the men on horseback and did not meet them, where did they go?"

"I kin tell ye, all right," said Dick, stolidly.

"Then do so, and hurry about it! They will escape!"

"I don't think they will escape," quietly; "they think they hev fooled ye. They hev hid frum ye."

"Ah! So they've hid from us, have they? Tell us where they are, my fine young fellow, and we shall be very much obliged to you."

"I don't know whether you will or not!" thought Dick.

Then aloud he said:

"All right; I'll tell ye."

"Do so, then! Hurry!"

"All right; d'ye see thet gate?"

Dick indicated the gate.

The captain nodded, an eager light appearing in his eyes.

"Yes, yes!"

"All right. Go through that gate and down the road," said Dick, pointing; "just across the ravine you will find the rebels."

"Thank you!" said the captain.

Then he turned to his men.

"We will follow the scoundrels and capture them!" he cried; "forward, march!"

The gate was opened, and the redcoats passed through. They hastened forward, following the winding road.

"You are going right into the trap," thought Dick; "the ruse will prove successful."

Dick waited until they had got well in advance and then he followed.

He wished to be as close as possible when the encounter took place.

The British made their way along the road, until they came to the hollow.

Then they crossed it.

They looked up at the bluffs expectantly.

They thought sure they would see the fugitives somewhere near.

Nor were they mistaken.

Suddenly a shrill whistle sounded.

It was given utterance to by Dick, who was now only about seventy-five yards behind the redcoats.

As the whistle sounded, up from behind rocks and boulders, and out from behind trees, appeared the entire company of "Liberty Boys" as if by magic.

In the hands of every "Liberty Boy" was a musket.

And the musket was in each and every instance leveled full at the redcoats.

To say the latter were astonished is putting it mildly.

They were amazed.

For the moment their faculties were as though paralyzed.

They could not move or speak.

Dick seized the opportunity.

"Surrender!" he cried, in a loud, ringing voice; "surrender, and save unnecessary bloodshed!"

This aroused the redcoats.

The captain was plucky.

He was not disposed to surrender without trying to strike a blow.

"Surrender?—never!" he cried.

Then to his men he cried:

"Stand your ground, men, and fight to the death!"

The men uttered a cheer.

They were brave, if they were redcoats.

Dick was sorry to hear the captain give the order.

He knew it would cause bloodshed, and he would much rather have avoided this.

But this was war time.

There is no mercy in war.

It is cruel.

It was kill or be killed.

And Dick was determined that it should be the redcoats who should be thus treated.

He saw the redcoats were getting ready to fire.

The "Liberty Boys" must get in the first blow.

So he gave a shrill whistle.

This had been agreed upon as to be the signal to fire.

The "Liberty Boys" were all ready to fire.

Their muskets were leveled.

All they had to do was to press the triggers.

As the sound of the whistle came to their ears, they pulled the trigger.

A thunderous report rent the atmosphere.

The volley did great execution.

Fifteen or twenty of the redcoats went down, killed or wounded.

But the others uttered a defiant shout and fired in return.

Two or three of the "Liberty Boys" were wounded.



"Surrender!" cried Dick, in his clear, ringing voice; "surrender and save further slaughter!"

"Forward, men!" cried the British captain; "forward! At the rebels! Show them how British soldiers can fight!"

The men started toward the bluffs at a dog-trot.

"Give them a pistol volley!" cried Dick. "Fire!"

Crash!

The noise made by the pistols was deafening.

A number of the redcoats went down.

But the others kept on going forward.

They were brave.

"Give them a volley from your pistols!" cried the British captain. "Fire!"

The soldiers obeyed.

This volley did not do much damage.

The reason was that the "Liberty Boys" dodged back behind the trees and boulders and were thus sheltered.

"Surrender!" again cried Dick. "You are hopelessly outnumbered and there is no use of rushing to your death! Surrender, captain, and save the lives of your men!"

This time the captain took Dick's advice.

He realized that he was getting his men slaughtered.

And uselessly.

Moreover, he realized that they could do the enemy no great amount of damage.

The "Liberty Boys" were too well sheltered.

So he decided to make the best of a bad situation.

"Halt!" he cried to his men.

The men obeyed.

They were soldiers, and well-trained ones.

No matter what the order, they would obey it.

Dick saw that the British were going to surrender.

So he did not give his men the order to fire another volley.

"We surrender!" cried the British captain.

"That is sensible!" cried Dick. "Throw down your arms!"

The redcoats threw down their arms.

"Now retire five paces!" ordered Dick.

The redcoats obeyed.

"Advance and secure the arms, 'Liberty Boys!'" cried Dick.

The "Liberty Boys" came down from their position and secured the arms.

Then the youths brought their horses.

They utilized their halter-straps to bind the wrists of the prisoners.

Dick sent one of the youths to a house which was about half a mile away, to get a spade.

When the youth returned, a large, shallow excavation was made, and the dead soldiers were buried therein.

There were a number of wounded redcoats, and Dick went to the farmhouse and made arrangements with the man to take care of the wounded men.

Then they were taken to the house and left there.

Then the march was taken up for Middlebrook.

When the "Liberty Boys" arrived there with their prisoners, they were greeted with cheers by their comrades.

The "Liberty Boys" had been much more successful than any of their comrades had expected that they would be.

They would not have been surprised had the "Liberty Boys" been captured, but here they were back, safe and sound, and with seventy prisoners.

Dick went to headquarters to report to General Washington.

The general was glad to see him.

"So you are back again, are you?" he remarked with a smile.

"Yes, your excellency," replied Dick.

"And I hear you returned the reverse of empty-handed."

"We brought back seventy prisoners, your excellency."

Dick spoke quietly and modestly.

"Indeed! That was quite a haul!"

"Yes, your excellency."

Then General Washington asked for the details of the capture.

Dick gave them.

"That was well done," said the commander-in-chief, when Dick had finished; "that was a clever ruse, indeed!"

"It fooled them, at any rate," said Dick.

"And I am glad you made the capture, Dick. It will teach the British that we are wide awake and ready for them at any and all times."

"So it will, your excellency."

General Greene came in just at this moment, and the commander-in-chief told him what Dick had done.

He congratulated Dick heartily.

"You did splendidly!" he said; "ah, General Washington, if every company in your army was a company of 'Liberty Boys' we would speedily force the redcoats to return to England defeated!"

"You are right, General Greene," said the commander-in-chief, heartily.

Dick blushed like a girl.

"I am afraid you rate us a little bit too highly," he said deprecatingly.

"Not a bit of it—not a bit of it," said the commander-in-chief heartily.



"No, indeed!" from General Greene.

After some further conversation, Dick excused himself and withdrew.

"He is a fine young fellow," said General Greene, when Dick had gone.

"One of the finest youths I ever knew!" said General Washington.

And Dick deserved all the praise he received from the two great generals.

Dick returned to the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys."

His eyes were glowing.

The sincere praise from the lips of the great men had pleased him.

He knew it was not empty lip-service.

Neither Washington nor Greene were the men to bestow praise where it was undeserved.

"What did the commander-in-chief say, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook as Dick put in an appearance.

Dick smiled.

"He said that we have done a good thing, Bob," was the quiet reply.

"I knew he would say that!" said Bob; "I knew he would be tickled!"

"He could not well help being pleased," said Mark Morrison.

"That's right," said Sam Sunderland.

The boys were well pleased to know they had earned the esteem and praise of General Washington.

Each and every one of the "Liberty Boys" were convinced that the commander-in-chief of the Continental Army was the greatest man who ever lived—and there are many bright people who hold the same views to this day.

"Say, that was quite an exploit, when you come to think about it!" said Bob. "We captured a goodly number of the redcoats."

"It was a clever ruse Dick played on them," said Sam Sunderland.

The others all said the same.

Some of the soldiers from the other regiments came in, now, and asked the youths for the story of the capture.

Dick told it.

He modestly disclaimed the credit for the affair, but the boys wouldn't let him off so easily.

"It was all Dick's doings!" said Mark Morrison. "But for his planning, and the ruse which he worked on them, we should have failed to make the capture."

The others all said the same.

"Oh, you boys want to give me too much credit," he said.

But the others demurred.

"We would never have amounted to much as a company, but for you, Dick!" declared Sam Sunderland. "You are the head and brains of the entire crowd."

"Oh, no!" said Dick.

He was modest.

He did not like to hear himself praised too highly.

He preferred that the other youths take a share of the praise.

But they were not so very far wrong.

Dick Slater was a remarkable youth.

And he was modestly oblivious to this fact.

He had done more, perhaps, than any other one person—with the exception, of course, of the commander-in-chief and some of the more important officers—for the cause of Liberty.

And he was destined to do much more for the glorious Cause before the War of the Revolution came to an end.

He was destined to do wonderful work for the Cause of Liberty.

He felt that he would be at all times ready and willing, nay glad to risk his life if by so doing he could render aid in the fight for Independence.

And the other "Liberty Boys," influenced by his example, would be ready to do their share also.

Thus was Dick a great power for good.

The brave youth was soon to enter upon one of the most thrilling experiences of his life, the story of which will be told in the next number of "The Liberty Boys of '76."

## THE END.

The next number (15) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' TRAP, AND WHAT THEY CAUGHT IN IT," by Harry Moore.

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